

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

WHAT NEWCOMERS TO EUROPE NEED TO KNOW

Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) operates transportation services for children attending Department of Defense (DoD) schools in Europe. Services include daily busing to and from school, as well as transportation for students participating in school-sponsored field trips, academic and athletic competitions and other special events.



Key Facts About Daily Transportation

The location of family quarters, not the sponsor's place of duty or work, determines which school children attend and their eligibility for transportation.

Distance to the assigned school determines whether children ride the bus or walk. The standard for transportation of elementary school children is more than one mile and for secondary school children more than 1.5 miles. Approximately one half of the 48,000 children attending DoD schools in Europe ride the bus, with the other half walking or using other transportation.

Family quarters must also be within the commuting area. Housing referral offices have information about the commuting area and its boundaries.

Children enrolled in pre-Kindergarten and Sure-Start programs and those with an Individual Education Program (IEP) may receive specialized transportation services tailored to the child's age and/or IEP requirements.

Transportation to DoD schools in Europe is a lot like that in the United States, but with key operational and safety differences.

DoDDS does not own buses or employ drivers, but contracts with host-nation commercial companies for transportation services.

Buses are not the yellow vehicles familiar to American children, but European-style tourist (see image 1) or city transit coaches (see image 2), marked with the international school bus sign (see image 3), front and back.

Drivers are not required to speak English, only the host-nation language. Buses are equipped with two-way communications, either radio or cellular telephone, linking drivers to the contractor's central control desk.

Drivers are not required to enforce good order and discipline on the bus. Their job is to operate the bus safely. Parents are responsible for their children's behavior on the bus.

Because even one child's misbehavior can interfere with safe operation of the bus and endanger everyone on board, disciplinary action is taken on infractions, including temporary suspension or permanent revocation. Transportation is a privilege, not a right or entitlement. Safety is paramount.

Registration of children with the school is the first step. Next is a visit to the school transportation office (parents and children) to register for transportation; receive a mandatory bus pass and information on routes stops and schedules; safety; and behavior standards and discipline rules.

In Europe, *TRAFFIC IS NOT REQUIRED TO STOP* for loading and unloading school buses. American children must follow this life-saving rule:

NEVER CROSS THE STREET IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND THE BUS.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3

In ENGLAND, *TRAFFIC DIRECTION IS REVERSED* and American children must follow this life-saving rule: *Before crossing the street IN ENGLAND, look RIGHT, look LEFT, and then look RIGHT again.*